

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 207358

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

CINCPAC PRIORITY,:RUEHCR/CINCPACFLT PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 207358

EXDIS, MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, SN, AS, US

SUBJECT: U.S. MILITARY USE OF SINGAPORE FACILITIES

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SINGAPORE 3864

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HAS CONVEYED A MESSAGE FROM THE
GOA REGARDING PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT
US EFFORTS TO OBTAIN "TRANSIT" RIGHTS THROUGH SINGAPORE
FOR US MILITARY FLIGHTS. TO FACILITATE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH
TO SINGAPORE ON US BEHALF, MESSAGE REQUESTS DETAILS OF

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 207358

MILITARY ACTIVITIES USG WISHES TO HAVE AUTHORIZED BY GOS

AND EXPECTED NEED FOR AND FORM OF QUID PRO QUO.

2. DOD IS UNDERTAKING TO BRIEF HEAD OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE STAFF, WASHINGTON, ON OUR SINGAPORE STAGING REQUIREMENTS AND THE PRESENT STATUS OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOS ON THE SUBJECT. REQUEST YOU DO SAME AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF GOA IN CANBERRA. FOLLOWING POINTS SHOULD BE MADE:

A. US INTEREST IN SINGAPORE STAGING AND OVERFLIGHT/ LANDING RIGHTS STEMS FROM OUR DESIRE TO AUGMENT THE TRANSIT "FACILITIES" THE THAI HAVE PUBLICLY STATED THEY ARE PREPARED TO GRANT US. WE HAVE NOT AS YET USED THESE FACILITIES DUE TO OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS BUT EXPECT TO DO SO

SOON. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, DECIDED TO SEEK GOS AGREEMENT TO CONDUCT FLIGHTS THROUGH SINGAPORE REGARDLESS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND.

B. WE SEEK TO CONDUCT FOLLOWING FLIGHTS THROUGH SINGAPORE:

-- OCCASIONAL OVERFLIGHTS BY P-3 AIRCRAFT EN ROUTE TO AND FROM INDONESIAN OCEAN. GOS HAS ALREADY AGREED TO THESE FLIGHTS AND FIRST ONE WILL BEGIN SHORTLY.

-- MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND (MAC) SUPPORT FLIGHTS TRANSITING SINGAPORE EN ROUTE FROM CLARK AIR BASE TO DIEGO GARCIA AND RETURN. GOS HAS ALREADY APPROVED INAUGURATION OF THESE FLIGHTS ON AN INTERMITTENT BASIS AND FIRST WILL BEGIN SHORTLY, AFTER FIRST P-3 OVERFLIGHTS. ONCE PATTERN HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, WE MAY INCREASE THE SCHEDULE OF THESE FLIGHTS TO TWICE A WEEK.

-- P-3 MARITIME AIR PATROL FLIGHTS (MAP) STAGING THROUGH SINGAPORE EN ROUTE TO AND FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN, ON A MAXIMUM FREQUENCY OF 8 TO 12 PER MONTH WITH A POSSIBLE REQUIREMENT FOR AN ADDITIONAL 8-12 FLIGHTS INTERMITTENTLY.

TO SUPPORT THESE FLIGHTS, MAP FLIGHTS WILL REQUIRE OVER-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 207358

NIGHT CREW ACCOMMODATIONS AND BOTH MAP AND MAC FLIGHTS WILL REQUIRE CONTRACTOR SUPPORT SERVICES. AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, NO STATIONING OF US MILITARY PERSONNEL IN SINGAPORE IN CONNECTION WITH THESE FLIGHTS IS CONTEMPLATED.

C. IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR, WE INFORMED PRIME MINISTER LEE OF OUR DESIRE TO USE SINGAPORE FACILITIES AND OUT-

LINED TO HIM THE FOREGOING REQUIREMENTS. WHILE AGREEING TO P-3 OVERFLIGHTS AND DIEGO GARCIA SUPPORT FLIGHTS, LEE EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN OVER STAGING P-3 FLIGHTS THROUGH SINGAPORE. HE FEARED THAT THIS COULD LEAVE SINGAPORE OPEN TO CHARGES OF FALLING UNDER UNDUE US INFLUENCE.

D. TO PRESENT THESE FLIGHTS IN MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT, LEE SUGGESTED TO US THAT SOME DEGREE OF AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION WITH THEM WOULD BE DESIRABLE. WITHOUT SPECIFYING DETAILS, HE PROPOSED THAT THPY MIGHT BE ASSOCIATED IN SOME MANNER WITH THE FIVE-POWER AIR DEFENSE AGREEMENT. HE INDICATED THAT HE COULD NOT ENVISAGE FORMAL ARRANGEMENT BEING COMPLETED UNTIL AFTER MID-JANUARY 1977 BUT THAT PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS COULD TAKE PLACE EARLIER.

E. WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL FOR AUSTRALIAN OFFER TO TAKE UP THIS MATTER WITH GOS. WE SUGGEST THEY CONSIDER MAKING FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- STRONG EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR MARITIME AIR PATROL FLIGHTS IN INDIAN OCEAN AS CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL DEFENSE.

-- SOUNDING OUT GOS ON WHAT LEE HAS IN MIND AS POSSIBLE AUSTRALIAN ROLE IN PRESENTING FLIGHTS, WHILE NOTING THAT ANY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE MALAYSIAN ASSENT WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPRACTICAL.

IN THIS CONNECTION, WE UNDERSTAND FROM SINGAPORE EMBASSY WASHINGTON THAT LEE IS DUE IN AUSTRALIA IN MID-SEPTEMBER FOR TWO-WEEK VISIT. THIS MIGHT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF GOA APPROACH IN SINGAPORE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 207358

F. WE DO NOT EXPECT SPECIFIC GOS PRESSURE FOR QUID PRO QUO IN THIS ISSUE. GOA SHOULD BE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAVE BEEN ACCOMMODATING TO SINGAPORE ON NUMBER OF MATTERS RELATING TO DEFENSE. WE HAVE MADE POSSIBLE GOS PURCHASE OF TWO C-130 AIRCRAFT ON HIGHLY FAVORABLE TERMS, FOR EXAMPLE, AND HAVE APPROVED GOS PROCUREMENT IN US OF VARIETY OF EQUIPMENT. FLIGHTS WILL ALSO GATHER INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION OF INTEREST TO GOS, WHICH WE WOULD OF COURSE MAKE AVAILABLE TO THEM.

G. OUR PLANS FOR STAGING THE P-3 FLIGHTS THROUGH SINGAPORE ENVISAGE USE OF US AIRCRAFT, CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS SUCH, WITH US CREWS. IMPLEMENTING THIS PARTICULAR PROGRAM WOULD BY NO MEANS PRECLUDE BROADER US-

AUSTRALIAN COOPERATION IN OVERALL SURVEILLANCE AND PATROL OF INDIAN OCEAN AREAS, HOWEVER, AND COULD ACTUALLY BECOME A PART OF SUCH COOPERATION. FURTHERMORE, IF GOA OR GOS FEELS THAT GREATER DEGREE OF AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR SINGAPOREAN ACCEPTANCE, WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO CONSIDER ANY SUGGESTIONS ALONG THIS LINE THAT MIGHT EMERGE FROM AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO SINGAPORE.

3. FOR SINGAPORE: SUGGEST YOU TELL AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER BIRCH THAT WE ARE MAKING FOREGOING PRESENTATION TO AUSTRALIANS IN WASHINGTON AND CANBERRA, AND THAT HE SHOULD EXPECT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT. ROBINSON

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